Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 923 (1981)[1]

Ill-treatment of horses during international transport

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its Recommendation 287 (1961), on the international transport of animals, aiming at lessening the suffering of animals during international transport ;

2. Mindful that this recommendation was instrumental in initiating the drawing up of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport, which was opened for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1971 ;

3. Having regard to the additional Protocol to the above-mentioned convention, providing for the European Community to become a Contracting Party to this instrument ;

4. Welcoming the fact that all Council of Europe member states, except three, have to date ratified the convention, and that a non-member state, Finland, as well as the European Community, has also adhered to the convention ;

5. Concerned by reports that, in certain contracting and non-contracting states, conditions during the international transport of horses for slaughter do not meet the requirements of the convention, causing grave and unnecessary suffering to the animals concerned ;

6. Expressing particular alarm over conditions which - in spite of certain laudable efforts at improvement - are said still to prevail during live transport by sea, rail and road from, in particular, the USSR and Poland to western Europe, from Greece to Italy, and from North African countries to southern Europe ;

7. Noting that, while transport by sea and rail is relatively easy to control and allows for better care of the horses, the more and more frequent transport by road, especially over long distances, causes even greater suffering to the animals, due to lack of water, food, space and adequate care,

8. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

8.1. urge all Contracting Parties to ensure within their territory that the convention is scrupulously adhered to, and to do their utmost to ensure that the same applies in countries of export or transit with which they trade in live horses ;

8.2. invite important countries of export or transit, such as Poland, the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Yugoslavia and countries in North Africa, to adhere to the convention in conformity with its Article 49.i ;

8.3. encourage Liechtenstein, Malta and Portugal to ratify the convention as soon as possible ;

8.4. add to the convention an additional protocol stipulating the creation of a permanent body with Assembly representation, to oversee its application ;

---

1. Assembly debate on 1 October 1981 (9th Sitting) (see Doc. 4758Doc. 4758, report of the Committee on Agriculture). Text adopted by the Assembly on 1 October 1981 (9th Sitting).

8.5. invite the contracting states to the convention to make greater use of the provisions for the settlement of disputes stated in Article 47 of the convention, in particular as concerns consultation and arbitration between Contracting Parties ;

8.6. have as their long-term goal the complete abandonment of long-distance international transport of live horses for slaughter, and instead to export or import horsemeat in refrigerated condition ;

8.7. palliate, in so doing, the negative economic consequences that will result for the important slaughter industry that already exists in a number of importing states ;

8.8. invite the contracting states to the convention to prohibit, until the goal mentioned in vi above can be achieved, road transport over distances longer than 500 kilometres, obliging dealers instead to use transport by rail or sea ;

8.9. report to the Assembly every two years on the action taken in regard to the above recommendation.